

PROBLEMS AND CRISES OF
DEVELOPMENT 447

to do that ", " I shouldn't do that if I were you, come and do this/' are more in place and more effective here than with masturbation. In these activities the child is turning to other people and their real responses for his needed reassurance, and this attitude is further on the line of development towards normal adult sexuality and social responses than masturbation is. Nevertheless, it is important that interferences should take the positive rather than the negative line : " Come and do this rather than that/' Very often it is not necessary even to say " rather than that ". The child is quite aware that " come and do this " carries the implication " I shouldn't do that". The indirect satisfactions gained through song and dance, dressing up, dramatic play and handicrafts, do for the majority of children come to serve as a sufficient reassurance against the anxieties that give rise to the naive wish to display the body or the genital.

Active curiosity to see the genitals of other children and grown-ups can be largely deflected by the willingness of adults to answer questions and permit discussions about bodily processes, the origin of babies, etc. This I shall speak of under the next point.

Many detailed practical questions arise with regard to the social education of children in sexual and excretory matters. For example, when two or more quite little children want to go to the lavatory together, my own method is to avoid suggesting that the lavatory is a bad or dirty place, or that all visits in common must be prohibited, since such an attitude reinforces the child's primitive phantasies. I would, however, go with the children and concern myself, in a quiet, matter-of-fact way, with getting through the practical business sensibly and straightforwardly, not, however, prohibiting

conversa-
tion, and not scolding for any naive impulses of
exhibitionism.
The child's own development will presently lead
him to show
a certain awareness of guilt about such visits to
the lavatory
in common, and when this is apparent, I
would quietly
suggest that it was better to go singly, and to
come back to
these other games (or occupations) as soon as
possible, rather
than waste time playing in the lavatory. Such
an attitude
goes along with the training in independence, in
managing
garments, shutting and opening the door,
pulling the plug,
and so on, which I have already spoken of in
considering